

Technologies to Achieve Reading Success

John Ridge has been teaching reading for many years. Over the years, as his school was acquiring various technologies, he has been integrating some of the latest instructional tools into his teaching. Today, he has a library or stable of strategies for teaching reading that incorporate engaging and motivating technologies. What follows are some of these strategies that have been proven to be helpful to students of various abilities and learning styles.



LCD Projectors & Reading Instruction

- LCD projectors allow teachers and students to view pictures and corresponding words or sentences for all students to see and read as a class.
- Teachers can display difficult words. Words with multiple meanings, words that are spelled alike but pronounced differently, and idioms can be seen by the entire class.

Popular LCD Projectors for Schools:

- Hitachi Projector CP-S235 (Hitachi America, 650/244-7880, www.hitachi.us/digitalmedia);
- InFocus Projector X2 (InFocus, 503/685-8888, www.infocus.com);
- NEC Projector VT670 (NEC Solutions, 630/467-5000, www.necvisualsystems.com).

Scanners and Document Cameras for Reading Basics

- Scanners allow teachers and students to scan pictures and text (corresponding words/sentences/articles) that can be shown to the entire class with the help of a document camera.

- Document cameras enable teachers and students to share text in small print, such as a short newspaper article, with the entire class. No more overhead projector and expensive transparencies and opaque projectors.
- Teachers can scan student work such as lists of words, that need to be matched with the right synonyms, different phrases and words. All of this can be displayed for the entire class to see and discuss.

Popular Scanners and Document Cameras for Schools:

- Hewlett Packard LaserJet Multi-Function 4345 mfp (Hewlett Packard, 800/888-3224, www.hp.com/go/k12);
- AVerVision330 - Document Camera (AVerMedia Technologies, 408/263-3828, www.avermedia-usa.com);
- Ken-A-Vision Digital Video Flex 7200u - Multi-Purpose Camera (Ken-A-Vision, 816/353-4787, www.ken-a-vision.com).



Computers & Internet Access to Teach Reading

- Students can use online dictionaries, thesaurus, and encyclopedias that have speech capabilities to help them learn new words.
- Online texts with hyperlinks give students definitions of words and further information about key ideas in the text.
- Students can listen to books on CD's using the computer. They can read aloud and record their voices for fluency checks.

Popular Computers for Schools:

- OptiPlex 170L (Dell, 888/805-2864, www.dell.com);
- Gateway E-2300 Series (Gateway, 800/846-4208, www.gateway.com);
- Medallion 4000D (Tangent Computer, Inc., 800/342-9388, www.tangent.com).

E-Books in Reading Classes

- This on-screen format allows students to listen as the program reads the story aloud.
- Some e-books can highlight each word as the child progresses through the book.
- An e-book device can hold up to 40 novels.
- Students can read in the dark with an e-book, adjust the backlight, and even change the font size.

Popular E-Books for Schools:

- The Environment and Science (ABC-CLIO, 800/368-6868, www.abc-clio.com);
- All-American Girl (HarperCollins Publishers, 212/207-7000, www.perfectbound.com);
- Alexander (Random House, www.randomhouse.com).

Concept-Mapping Software to Develop Reading Skills

- Students use graphic organizers, such as concept maps, to help focus on the key concepts in a text and relationships among those concepts.

Concept-Mapping Software Products for Schools:

- SMART Ideas (SMART Technologies, 888/427-6278, www.smarttech.com);



- Inspiration (Inspiration Software, 800/877-4292; www.inspiration.com).

Reading Software Programs

- These programs teach students how to pronounce each phoneme properly by providing many graphics and slow-motion video. These demonstrate proper mouth and tongue positions.

- Students are presented with word pairs where only one of the two words contains the phoneme they are studying (buck vs. beak, or meat vs. mutt). They select the right word and are also presented with words that contain the sound they are studying in various positions (at the beginning, in the middle or at the very end).

Popular Reading Software Programs for Schools:

- CompassLearning Odyssey Reading/Language Arts (Compass Learning, 800/422-4339, www.compasslearning.com);
- PLATO Focus Reading and Language Program (Plato Learning, 800/447-5286, www.plato.com);
- Scholastic READ 180 (Scholastic, 877/234-7323, www.scholastic.com/READ180);
- AceReader (Stepware, 800/223-7323, www.acereader.com).



There is no doubt that the investment in technology hardware and instructional software provides great benefits to student achievement. Students become better readers and writers as well as technology literate. A systematic approach to reading instruction incorporates varied approaches and instructional resources that is satisfying for the learner as well as the teacher. ■

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Another Way to Keep Computers Safe

With the ever-growing reliance on remote and mobile computers in the K-12 school environments, teachers, and all school staff, are faced with the challenge of how to keep those assets safe and secure. *ComputraceComplete* from Absolute Software has a computer theft recovery worth checking out.

ComputraceComplete is installed and hidden on the hard drive of a host computer. Once installed, the *Computrace* software automatically contacts the Absolute Monitoring Center server via an Internet or modem connection. In the event that a computer is stolen or lost, it is "flagged" in the database and the call-back time is set to every 15 min



utes. The next time the stolen machine goes online, its location is actually tracked via the thief's IP address or telephone number.

Consider this scenario: A high school teacher places her laptop in her desk drawer before leaving to run some errands. When she returns to school later, she discovers the laptop is missing. She reports it to the main office and Absolute Software is then notified.

After flagging the computer in the database as stolen, Absolute's recovery officers check the call history on the machine and notice that the computer has dialed in from a residential phone number. Absolute identifies the phone number and can find the corresponding street address of the call location. A school employee is contacted with the location information. The police are contacted to retrieve the computer, return it to the school and the perpetrator is charged in the crime.

These are amazing times we live in today. Want more? www.absolute.com or 800/220-0733.

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